

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 EA-06 SAM-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5277

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 2081

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP

SUBJECT: KING TALKS TOUGH ON SPANISH SAHARA

1. IN APRIL 28 INTERVIEW WITH EDOUARD SABLIER ON FRANCE
INTER, KING HASSAN TOOK VERY TOUGH LINE ON SPANISH SAHARA
ISSUE AND PROFESSED HIMSELF CONFIDENT THAT SAHARA, "WHICH HAD
ALWAYS LOOKED NORTH, NEVER IN OTHER DIRECTIONS", WOULD BE
RETURNED TO MOROCCO. "WILL OF PEOPLE FOR UNITY", KING SAID,
WOULD ASSURE SAHARA'S RETURN AND SHOULD SITUATION IN COLONY
DETERIORATE AND "VIETNAMIZE", SAHARA WOULD RETURN TO MOROCCANS
JUST AS VIETNAM HAD RETURNED TO VIETNAMESE. KING CITED
HISTORIC LINKS BETWEEN MOROCCAN MONARCHY AND SAHARANS AND
SAID IT DIFFICULT TO TELL IF "IT IS WE WHO WILL RETURN TO
SAHARA OR THE SAHARA WHICH WILL RETURN TO MOROCCO".

2. TURNING TO MILITARY ASPECT OF SITUATION, KING SAID THAT
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ARMY WHICH HE HAS IN SOUTH IS NOT THERE "TO FIGHT SPANISH

IN CLASSIC, MODERN WAY". EACH SIDE WOULD NEED SEVERAL DIVISIONS TO DEFEND 500 KILOMETER MOROCCAN-SAHARAN FRONTIER, HE NOTED. MOROCCAN UNITS, KING WENT ON, ARE IN REGION FOR TWO PURPOSES: TO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE, AND "TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK, AT ALL LEVELS, FOR THE INEXORABLE MOVE WHICH MOROCCAN PEOPLE, LED BY ITS KING, WILL NOT HESITATE TO MAKE IF EVER AN ANGRY OR UNSTEADY MIND WERE TO SET IN MOTION A PROCESS OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN SAHARA".

3. AS HE HAS IN PAST, KING SAID BEST WAY OF SOLVING PROBLEM WAS THROUGH MOROCCAN-SPANISH DIALOGUE BUT HIS TONE MORE OMINOUS THAN IN RECENT PAST. DIALOGUE, KING SAID, WOULD SAVE TIME AND MONEY AND ABOVE ALL WOULD PERMIT COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, WHICH HAS BEEN IN DECLINE, TO BE PRESERVED. KING SAID HE HOPED SPAIN UNDERSTOOD THAT SHE MUST LEAVE SAHARA IN ANY CASE AND THAT SHE WAS FACED WITH CHOICE OF AIDING COLONY'S RETURN TO MOTHER COUNTRY OR OF CREATING NEW VIETNAM.

4. COMMENT: KING'S REFERENCES TO VIETNAM AND MILITARY FRAMEWORK FOR "INEXORABLE MOVE" SEEM DESIGNED TO SIGNAL MOROCCAN WILLINGNESS TO RESORT TO GUERRILLA TACTICS IN SAHARA, SHOULD THIS PROVE NECESSARY. WE HAVE REPORTED INDICATIONS THAT MOROCCAN ARMY IN PROCESS OF TRAINING CADRES FOR GUERRILLA FORCE, AND ISTIQLAL PARTY LEADER RECENTLY IMPLIED THAT GOM MIGHT BE CONTEMPLATING PARA-MILITARY AS WELL AS POLITICAL ACTIVITY WITHIN SAHARA (RABAT 1992). ALTHOUGH KING TOUCHED ON MOROCCAN-SPANISH DIALOGUE THEME, THRUST OF STATEMENT WAS DECIDELY MILITANT, AND STATEMENT MAY BE INTENDED AS SIGNAL, TO ALGERIANS AS WELL AS TO SPANISH, OF NEW MOROCCAN MILITANCY.

5. KING'S SEEMINGLY UNCONDITIONAL REJECTION OF SELF-DETERMINATION PRINCIPLE ALSO SEEMS TO BREAK NEW GROUND. DURING HIS SEPTEMBER 17, 1974 PRESS CONFERENCE, AT WHICH HE LAUNCHED ICJ ADVISORY OPINION IDEAN KING SAID HE WOULD ACCEPT REFERENDUM WERE COURT TO DETERMINE THAT SAHARA HAD BEEN "RES NULLIUS" PRIOR TO SPANISH OCCUPATION. HIS APPARENT CLOSING OF THIS OPTION MAY HAVE BEEN MORE A RHETORICAL SWIPE AT THE ALGERIANS THAN A LEGALISTIC STATEMENT.

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ALGERIANS SEEM TO HAVE COME OUT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION PRINCIPLE AT RECENTLY CONCLUDED ARAB LEAGUE FOR MINS CONFERENCE (RABAT 2051), AND WELL PLACED FOR MINS OFFICIAL HAS TACITLY CONFIRMED THAT MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN FOR MINS CLASHED ON THIS POINT AT CONFERENCE.

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